



Drowning and Near-Drowning Injury Factsheet

Injury Prevention & Control Program

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Overview

Hawaii had the 2nd highest resident drowning rate in the United States, a rate that was twice the average for the rest of the country. If drownings among non-residents were included it is likely that Hawaii would have the highest rate, as half (50%) of the victims were non-residents.

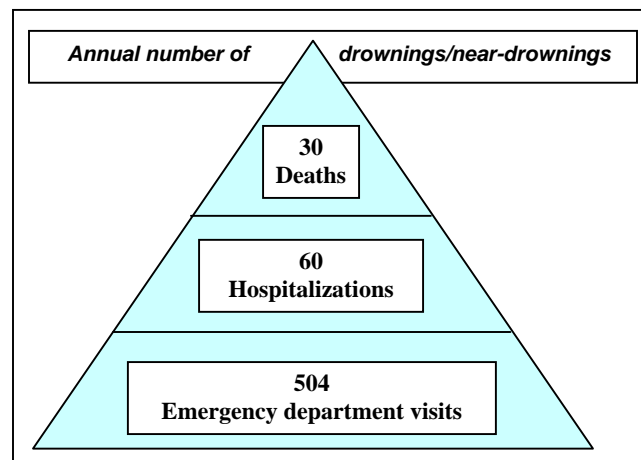
Drownings were the 5th leading cause of injury mortality, with an average of 30 deaths a year. For every resident who drowns in Hawaii, there are approximately 2 near-drownings that require hospitalization, and another 17 who are treated in emergency departments (ED) for near-drownings each year.

Mortality trends (2000-2004)

- No clear trend for drownings among residents (28 to 32 drownings per year).
- Drownings of non-residents generally increased over time, reaching a high of 39 in 2004.

Groups at risk

- Almost all victims of drownings (87%) and near-drownings (84%) were males.
- There was no high-risk age for drownings, while the highest rate for near-drownings was found for 15-24 year-old residents.
- Children under 5 years of age comprise 55% of victims who drown in swimming pools, and 44% of EMS calls for near-drownings in swimming pools on Oahu.



This factsheet describes injuries to Hawaii residents only, unless otherwise noted. Mortality data is mostly compiled from years 2000-2004. Hospitalization (2003) and ED data (2002) includes only non-fatal injuries.

Environment/geography

- Most (79%) drownings occur in the ocean or saltwater environments.
- Five-year drowning rates for residents of Hawaii County were twice that for Oahu (23/100,000 residents vs. 11/100,000).
- Of the 19 lifeguarded beaches on Oahu, Makapuu, Sandy, Waimea and Hanauma were all in the top 5 for both the number and rate of rescues.

Contributing factors

- Unintentional immersions (swept off rocks, boat crashes, etc.) led to 26% of ocean drownings.
- According to autopsy records (1996-2000) circulatory diseases, caused or contributed to 16% of the drownings, 10% were related to alcohol, 10% to drugs, and 5% to seizure disorders.